

Message Text

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ORIGIN AF-08

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EB-07 IO-13 COME-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00

NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 TRSE-00

OMB-01 EUR-12 ACDA-07 NRC-05 OES-06 ERDA-05 AID-05

IGA-02 STR-04 /116 R

DRAFTED BY AF/C:TRBUCHANAN:OSM

APPROVED BY AF/C:TRBUCHANAN

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 233044

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, GB, US

SUBJECT: PRESIDENT BONGO'S PRIVATE VISIT TO US

1. SUMMARY: PRESIDENT BONGO DEPARTED
SEPT 18 AFTER A GENERALLY SUCCESSFUL PRIVATE
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2. AT PRESS CONFERENCE AND IN REMARKS DELIVERED AT DINNER HOSTED BY UNSYG, BONGO PLAYED OUT ROLE OF FUTURE OAU CHAIRMAN, "TALKING ON THE LEFT WHILE HIS HEART REMAINS ON THE RIGHT" (AS HE LATER EXPLAINED TO TEMPELSSMAN). IN BOTH FORA HE EXPRESSED SKEPTICISM REGARDING THE SECRETARY'S VISIT TO SOUTH AFRICA AND QUESTIONED UTILITY OF DEALING WITH VORSTER. AT PRESS CONFERENCE HE PRAISED THE SECRETARY FOR HIS EFFORTS BUT LONDERED WHO HAD ASKED HIM TO COME TO AFRICA AND WHO HE WAS REPRESENTING. WHILE HE SAID THAT WHITE SOUTH AFRICANS HAVE A RIGHT TO LIVE IN AFRICA, HE ARGUED THAT TIME FOR DIALOGUE WITH THEM WITHIN SOUTH AFRICA HAS PASSED. IN RESPONDING TO WALDHEIM'S AFTER-DINNER REMARKS, BONGO CONFIDENTIAL

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3. AMONG OTHER REMARKS OF INTEREST AT DINNER, BONGO ENDORSED WALDHEIM'S CANDIDACY FOR REELECTION AS UNSYG, IN THE NAME OF THE OAU. HE EXPRESSED MUCH GREATER

PESSIMISM THAN HAD WALDHEIM REGARDING THE PROSPECTS FOR THE NEW ECONOMIC ORDER SAYING THAT UN MUST GET THE GREAT POWERS TO BE MORE FORTHCOMING. HE DEFENDED WITHDRAWAL FROM OCAM ON THE GROUND THAT IT IS NOT NEEDED GIVEN THE OAU AND UN. AT THE PRESS CONFERENCE, HE PARTIALLY DEFENDED THE FRENCH SALE OF NUCLEAR POWER PLANTS TO SOUTH AFRICA, SAYING THAT AT LEAST IT WAS OVERT WHILE OTHERS AID SOUTH AFRICA COVERTLY. HE CONTRASTED BLACK-WHITE RELATIONS IN GABON TODAY WITH

EXPLOITIVE RELATIONS UNDER COLONIALISM, NOTING THAT WHITES AND BLACKS HAVE EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AT THE WORK BENCH, MUCH AS THEY DO IN THE US.

4. MOST OF MEETING BETWEEN GOVERNOR SCRANTON AND BONGO WAS SPENT IN JUSTIFYING BONGO'S INTEREST IN INCREASED MILITARY AID. HE SPOKE AT LENGTH ON HOW RESPONSIVE OTHER COUNTRIES (PHILIPPINES, MOROCCO) HAD BEEN TO HIS REQUESTS FOR ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE. HE DEPRECATED FRENCH MILITARY AID SAYING THAT MOST OF IT WAS ON A CASH BASIS. HE SAID HE HAD TURNED BACK THE PLANE OFFERED HIM AS A GIFT SINCE IT HAD ANTIQUE ARMAMENT HE HAD USED WHILE IN THE AIR FORCE. HE CONTRASTED SOVIET OFFER TO SELL HIM MILITARY EQUIPMENT WITH CHINESE GRANT OF TWO SMALL CRAFT. GOVERNOR SCRANTON TOLD BONGO THAT HE WOULD DO WHAT HE COULD TO BE HELPFUL IN MEETING WHAT HE HAD NOT APPRECIATED WAS BONGO'S TOP PRIORITY INTEREST; HE NOTED, HOWEVER, THAT HE HAD NO DIRECT ROLE TO PLAY IN SECURITY MATTERS. GOVERNOR SCRANTON THANKED BONGO FOR THE ASSISTANCE HIS COUNTRY HAD PROVIDED THE US ON MULTILATERAL ISSUES.

5. SEEKING TO JUSTIFY GABON'S NEEDS FOR MORE MILITARY
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AID THAN US HAS HITHERTO PROVIDED, BONGO CITED NOT ONLY HOSTILE CONGOLESE AND EQUATORIAL GUINEAN ATTITUDES BUT ALSO WHAT HE CLAIMED WAS THE POSITION TAKEN BY ANGOLAN PRESIDENT NETO AT A MEETING ON SAO TOME AND PRINCIPE LAST SPRING OF FORMER LUSOPHONE COUNTRIES. HE CLAIMED THAT NETO HAD ADVISED LOCAL OFFICIALS THAT SAO TOME AND PRINCIPE SHOULD NOT LOOK TO GABON BUT RATHER TO ANGOLA, AND TO THE SOVIETS AND CUBANS FOR ASSISTANCE. BONGO ASKED THAT YOU GET IN TOUCH WITH HIM UPON HIS RETURN AND HE WILL SHOW YOU THE REPORT ON THE NETO MEETING PROVIDED HIM BY A SAO TOMEAN MINISTER. (HE TOLD HIS MINISTERS THAT HE WOULD HAVE THEIR HEADS IF THEY REPORTED THAT HE HAD PASSED ON THIS DOSSIER TO THE AMERICANS.)

6. AF/C DIRECTOR BUCHANAN SOUGHT TO PERSUADE BONGO THAT THE DEPARTMENT IS DOING WHAT IT CAN TO BE RESPONSIVE TO HIS SECURITY NEEDS BUT THAT CONGRESSIONAL ATTITUDES TOWARD MILITARY ASSISTANCE IN GENERAL, AND SPECIFICALLY TO A COUNTRY AS WEALTHY AS GABON MAKE IT DIFFICULT FOR USG TO BE AS RESPONSIVE AS BONGO WOULD LIKE. BONGO INDICATED THAT HE UNDERSTOOD RELUCTANTLY THAT ANY AID MIGHT HAVE TO TAKE THE FORM OF CREDITS TO PURCHASE EQUIPMENT IN RELATIVELY SMALL SUMS DOLED OUT OVER A NUMBER OF YEARS, AND THIS WOULD BE ACCEPTABLE.

7. ON THE QUESTION OF ENCOURAGING AMERICAN BUSINESS TO EXPAND ITS ACTIVITIES IN GABON, BONGO SAID HE WAS ABOUT TO INAUGURATE A NEW POLICY OF BRINGING MORE FOREIGN ADVISERS INTO THE PRESIDENCY. AT PRESENT HIS FRENCH ADVISER prepares REPORTS FOR HIM AND ACTS AS A READY CONDUIT FOR FRENCH BUSINESSMEN VISITING GABON. HE WOULD LIKE TO HAVE AN AMERICAN, GERMAN AND PERHAPS A CHINESE IN THE PRESIDENCY ON WHOM HE COULD RELY TO DRUM UP INVESTMENT IN GABON. WHILE HE OBVIOUSLY HAD IN MIND SOMEONE ASSIGNED TO THE PRESIDENCY PAID BY THE USG, HE SAID HE WOULD ALSO BE PREPARED TO PAY THE INDIVIDUAL'S SALARY.

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DRAFTED BY:AF/C:JSBLODGETT:LAR

APPROVED BY:AF/C:TRBUCHANAN

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TO AMEMBASSY PARIS

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 233044

PARIS FOR MELONE

FOLOWING REPEAT STATE 233044 ACTION LIBREVILLE DTD 20 SEP 76.

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Message Attributes

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Draft Date: 20 SEP 1976
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: BoyleJA
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
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Review Authority: BoyleJA
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Margaret P. Grafeld
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US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

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Status: NATIVE
Subject: PRESIDENT BONGO'S PRIVATE VISIT TO US
TAGS: PFOR, OVIP, GB, US, (BONGO, ALBERT BERNARD)
To: LIBREVILLE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006